Wild Chervil *(Anthriscus sylvestris)*

Family: Parsley

Description:

Height: 1 to 4 feet on average but can grow over 6 feet tall

Stems: Hollow and furrowed; soft-hairy below, smooth above; fringe of hairs at stem nodes.

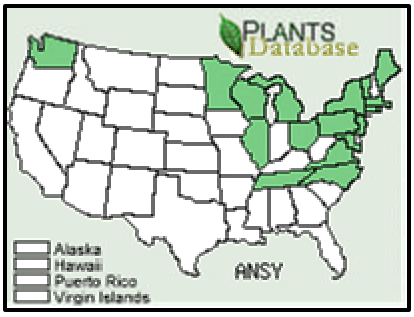
Leaves: Fern-like, nearly hairless (some hairs on lower surface); divided into smaller leaflets which in turn are also divided; leaf bases surround stem. Lower leaves can grow over 1 foot long.

Flowers: White flowers with 5 petals produced in umbels (umbrella-like cluster) at end of stems. Each flower produces 2 joined seeds with small antenna-like structures at the top.

Seeds: About 1/4 inch long; at first green, then shiny dark brown at maturity.

Roots: Thick, tuberous roots are aggressive and spread rapidly. Taproots can extend over 6 feet into the soil.

Biology/Ecology:
Wild chervil is classed as a biennial but can exhibit a short-lived perennial habit by developing sprouts from the side of parental taproots. Spread is primarily through seed dispersal. Wild chervil is native throughout Europe being most common on roadsides and hedgerows. It is also common in the northeastern United States. Recent infestations have been found in northern Washington as a possible introduction in British wildflower mixes. Wild chervil is not aromatic like the domestic herb, salad chervil.



Birds, water and human activity are responsible for seed movement. Mowing operations undertaken after seed set are responsible for linear movement along rights-of-ways.

Control

Wild chervil's out-competes natural vegetation. The weed is also a known host for a virus disease that infects carrots, celery and parsnips. Wild chervil is very difficult to control because of its extremely deep taproot and tolerance to selective herbicides. Rosettes and immature plants can be controlled by digging out the roots. Mature plants must be removed below the root crown to prevent resprouting. It is not known as a problem in cultivated fields.

References: http://plants.usda.gov, http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot/chervil.htm